

ruthless strategy of using Russian energy assets to apply economic and political pressure on neighboring countries and the West—including the disruption of oil and gas supplies—the Congress has recognized that if the Russian Government or its subsidiary companies seek to acquire critical U.S. energy infrastructure, Russia's coercive energy policies and its potential threat to the energy security of the United States must be considered as part of the CFIUS review process.

The National Security Foreign Investment Reform and Strengthened Transparency Act of 2007 strikes the right balance. It strongly encourages foreign investment in the United States without unnecessary and reasonable restrictions by companies that engage in responsible commercial activities and practices. However, H.R. 556 also makes it clear that energy-related infrastructure is critically important to our national security, and those companies that wish to acquire our infrastructure must adhere to internationally recognized standards of commercial conduct.

IN CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2007

Mr. ISRAEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the vast contributions that past and present African American leaders have made to our country. As February and Black History Month come to a close, it is time for us all to reflect on the crucial role that African Americans have played in this great nation.

As we commemorate the achievements of African American leaders, we must remember the efforts of their predecessors who dedicated their entire lives to opening the doors for those that followed. If it were not for the commitment of civil rights leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Medgar Evers and countless others, today's accomplishments may not have come to fruition. Their diligence and bravery paved the way for future African Americans and for that they deserve our deep recognition and praise.

Standing here today, I am honored to serve in this historic 110th Congress particularly because we have a record number of African Americans holding leadership positions. As a Democrat, I am proud to have Representative JAMES CLYBURN serving as the Majority Whip making him the highest ranking African American in Congressional history.

Additionally, we are privileged to have Chairman BENNIE THOMPSON of Mississippi of the Homeland Security Committee, Chairman JOHN CONYERS of Michigan on the Judiciary Committee, Chairwoman STEPHANIE TUBBS-JONES of Ohio on the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct and Chairman CHARLES RANGEL from my home state of New York on the Committee on Ways and Means. I am grateful to be serving in this body with such distinguished colleagues.

I hope you will all join me today on this the last day of February in recognizing and honoring the profound contributions of African Americans to the United States of America.

INTRODUCING THE NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NETWORK TO FREEDOM REAUTHORIZATION ACT

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Reauthorization Act. I would first like to thank the numerous colleagues that have joined me in prioritizing this legislation as original cosponsors, especially my colleague from Delaware, Representative CASTLE, and the National Parks Conservation Association for its endorsement of this legislation.

Our Nation's history is in peril when funding for our national parks is in peril. We must guarantee our future generations will be able to experience the critical journey of sacrifice and triumph that has empowered African-Americans and shaped the history of this Nation.

In pursuit of this charge, the National Park Service has emerged as one of the largest stewards of black history in the United States. The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom was established in 1998 and has served as a tremendous historical resource throughout our national parks. The Network to Freedom encompasses over 250 programs, sites, and partners in over 27 states and the District of Columbia. This unique network is a phenomenal national resource in its preservation of historic buildings, routes, programs, projects, and museums with thematic connections to the Underground Railroad. As the only national program dedicated to the preservation, interpretation, and dissemination of Underground Railroad history, this network is a vital asset to the National Park System.

Madam Speaker, my esteemed former colleague Congressman Louis Stokes established the Network to Freedom with a bipartisan coalition to preserve American history. In 1998, his legislation passed the house with only two dissenting votes. With such overwhelming support, it is only right that we honor the congressional mandate set forth by the establishing legislation.

Honoring this legislation will require concerted action to overcome the funding challenges that threaten all national parks. In fact, recent National Park Service financial projections show the Network to Freedom budget reducing by 72 percent by the year 2011. This vital asset will diminish without adequate funding for staff and operations to coordinate efforts, as well as additional oversight of grants for site development. The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Reauthorization Act calls for a modest \$2 million in funding to resolve the financial burdens that threaten the existence of the Network to Freedom. Importantly, this legislation also maintains the \$500,000 in grants that have been previously authorized for Network to Freedom site and program development. This funding will allow Network to Freedom staff to pursue and fulfill their Congressional mandate "to honor and interpret the history of the Underground Railroad."

Madam Speaker, I am confident that this bill will protect the interpretive interests of our Na-

tional Park System by providing the necessary support staff and oversight for the Network to Freedom to exist in perpetuity. As my distinguished former colleague Senator Carol Mosley-Braun so eloquently observed in her introduction of the companion establishing legislation in the Senate, "This bill helps to preserve the structures and artifacts of an organized resistance movement for freedom." I urge my colleagues to join me in preserving the history of the Underground Railroad so that generations to come will understand the sacrifices endured to achieve the freedom experienced today.

HONORING ALABAMA'S AIR NATIONAL GUARD

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 28, 2007

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to the men and women of Alabama's Air National Guard.

The men and women of Alabama's Air National Guard are most deserving of our commendation. In the hours following the terror attacks of September 11th, members of Alabama's Air National Guard mobilized to patrol the skies above major southern U.S. cities. For the next year, these brave men and women vigilantly maintained a watchful presence in the skies.

Shortly after responding to that call of duty, Alabama's Air National Guard was again called up to active duty in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Alabama's Air National Guard has taken a leading role in Iraq, with units completing up to three tours of duty. This high deployment level is a testament to the bravery and professional preparedness of the men and women of Alabama's Air National Guard, and confirms that Alabama's Air National Guard units are equipped with the necessary skills to meet the United States military's mission requirements in Iraq. This deployment also marked a significant first for Alabama's Air National Guard and the U.S. military; it was the first unit to ever use the GBU-38, commonly referred to as the "Smart Bomb," in combat. This very effective weapon, which minimizes collateral damage, was effectively employed by Alabama's Air National Guard in the Battle of Fallujah.

Currently, members of Alabama's Air National Guard are deployed to Arizona and New Mexico as part of increased efforts to secure America's southern border. The highest levels of the U.S. military leadership have recognized and honored the service of Alabama's Air National Guard. The Guard has received numerous Flight Safety awards from the Air Force Air Combat Command and the Air National Guard for its safety record, and it has also been recognized by Air Combat Command and the 9th Air Force Inspector General for excellence during Operational Readiness Inspections and Unit Compliance Inspections over the last two decades.

The dedication of the men and women of Alabama's Air National Guard, as well as the vision and leadership of the officers in charge, has brought honor to the Guard, their fellow Alabamians, and fellow Americans. They and their families have sacrificed a great deal.